Battle Analysis Methodology With Kasserine Pass Battle Analysis

“Move your command, i.e. the walking boys, pop guns, Baker’s outfit and the big fellow to M, which is due north of where you are now, as soon as possible. Have your boss report to a French gentleman, whose name begins with a J, at a place which begins with D, which is five grid squares to the left of M.”

MG Lloyd Fredendall

US II Corp Commander

1943

What is Battle Analysis?

A method used by the U.S. Army to provide a systematic approach to the study of battles, campaigns, and other operations.

Battle Analysis Steps

- **Step 1**: Define the Subject.
- **Step 2**: Review the Setting (Set the Stage).
- **Step 3**: Describe the Action.
- **Step 4**: Assess the Significance.

Format for Verbal or Written Product

Step 1--Define the Subject

Identify Event (where, who, when)

- Kasserine Pass (Sidi-Bou-Zid)
  - Leadership Lessons/Insights
  - Combined Arms Example
  - Changes in Doctrine
- Elements of US 1st Armored Division vs.
  German 10th and 21st Panzer Divisions
- 14 & 15 Feb 1943

Step 1--Define the Subject

Determine & Evaluate Research Material

- Books
  - Kasserine Pass – Martin Blumenson
    - Plus Chapter 8 “First Battles”
  - Official History of the US Army in World War II
    - Green Books
- Articles
  - Armor Magazine
    - Sidi Bou Zid-A Case History of Failure
- Other
  - Center of Military History – Staff Ride
    - Primary Sources on the WEB

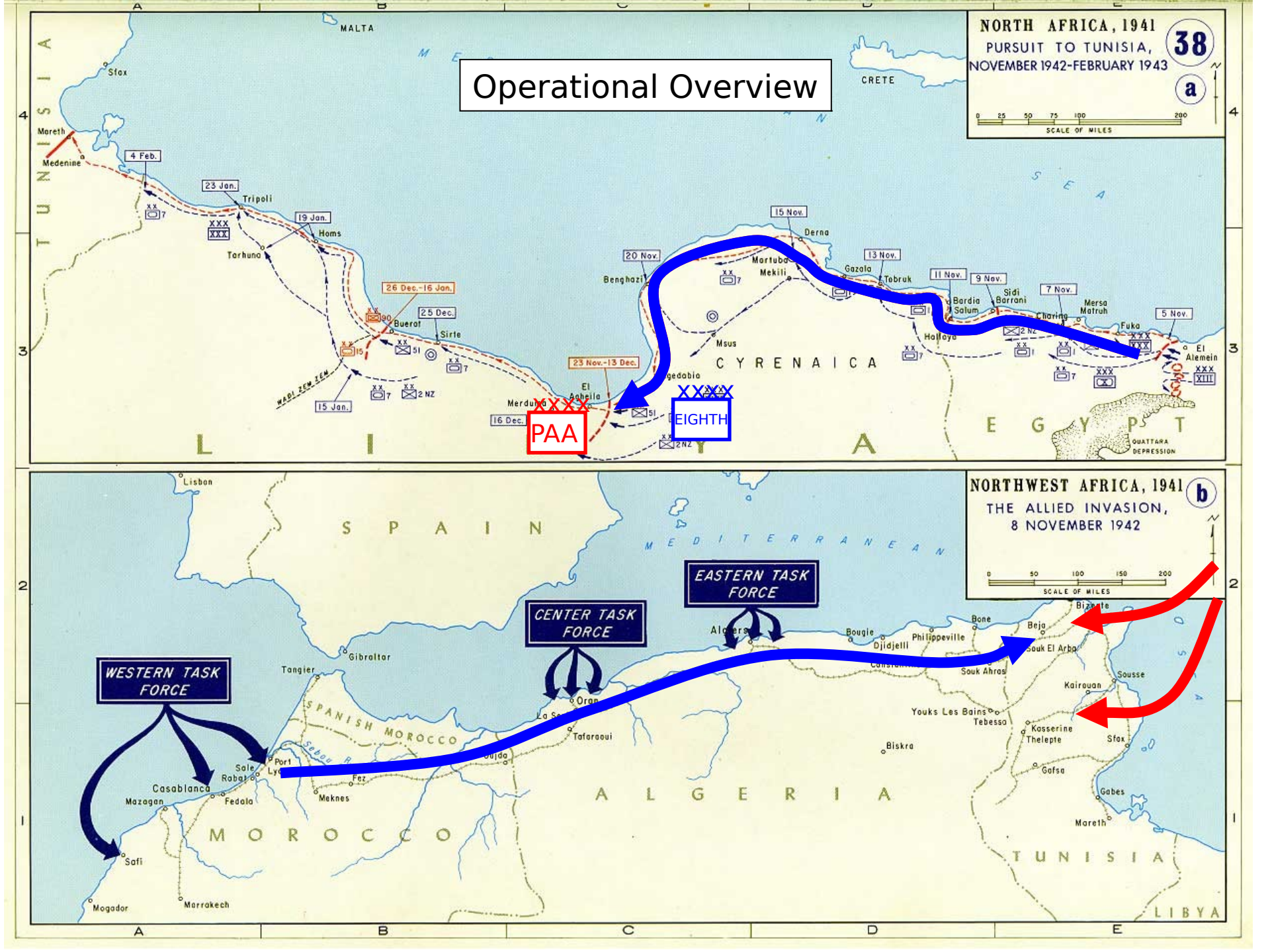
Step 2 – Review the Setting (Set the Stage)

A. Strategic/Operational Overview
B. Study Area of Operations
C. Compare Antagonists
D. State Missions & Initial Disposition of Opposing Forces.

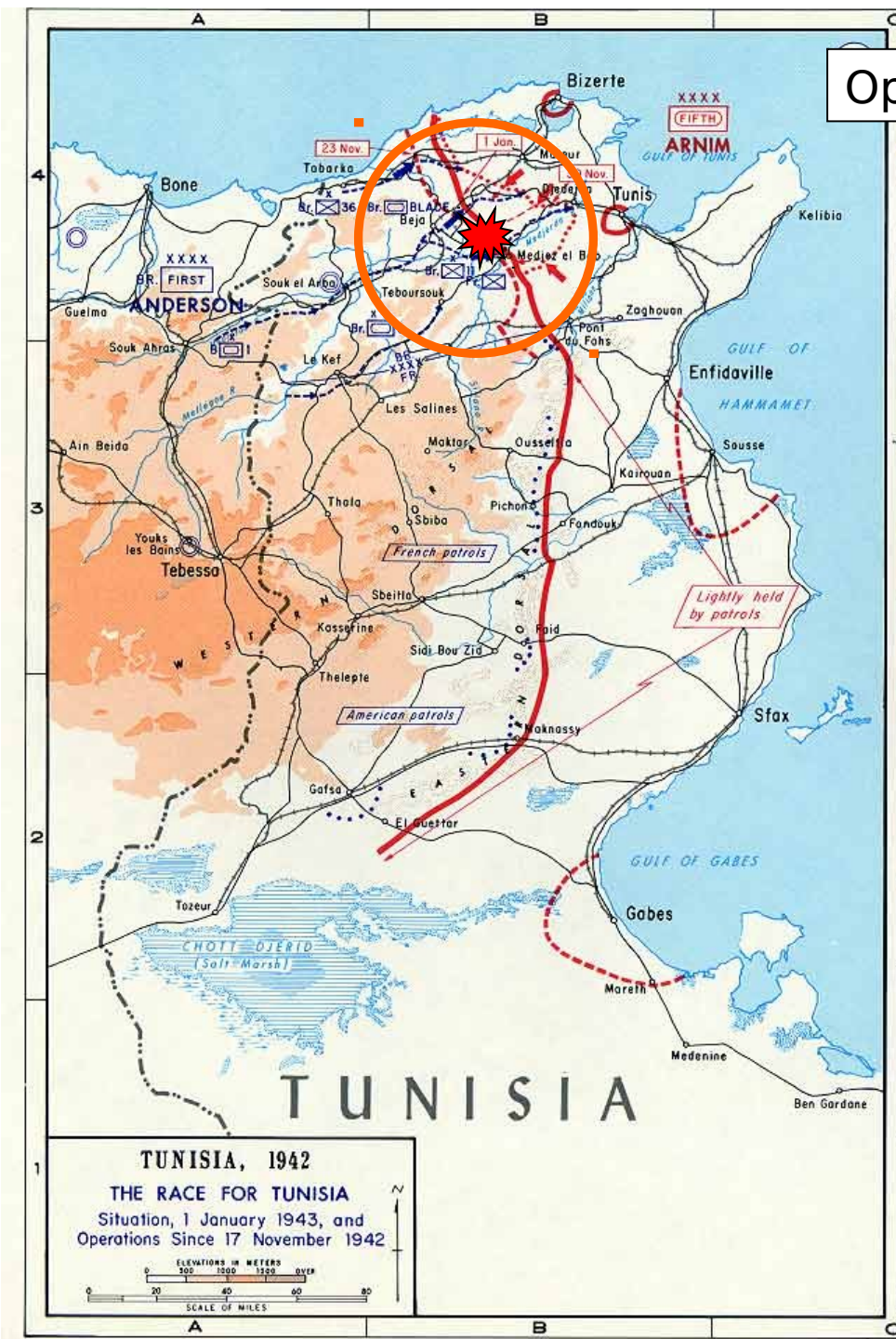
Step 2--Set the Stage

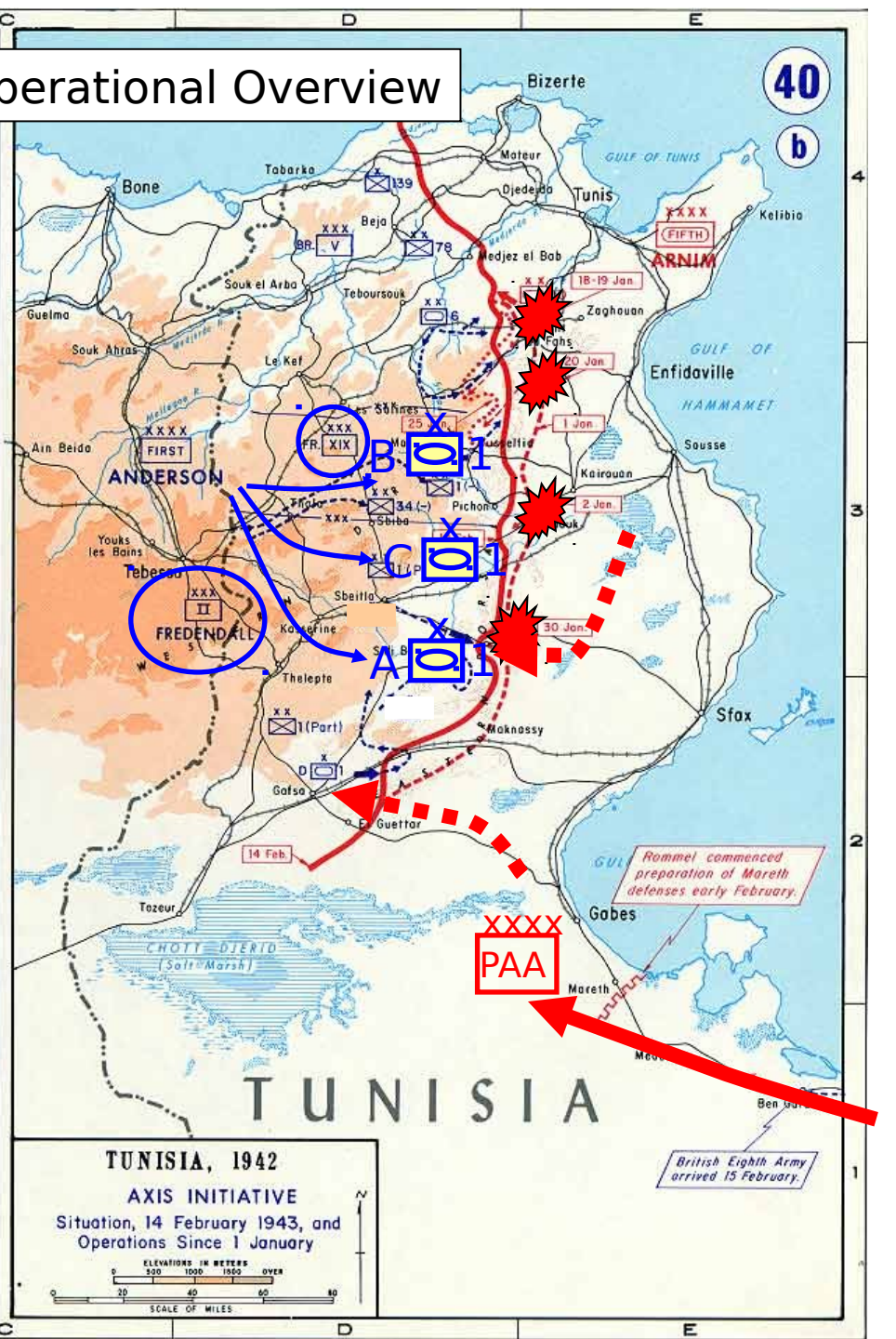
Part A: Strategic/Operational Overview

- World War II : 1939 – 1945
- Mediterranean Theater
- Objectives:
  - Allies – Invasion of North-West Africa
    - Creation of a Second Allied Front – Relief for Soviet Union
    - Control of the Suez Canal & Mediterranean Shipping Lane
    - Attack weaker Axis Forces
  - Axis – Control of North Africa to prevent Allied Goals and protect Italy/European holdings.

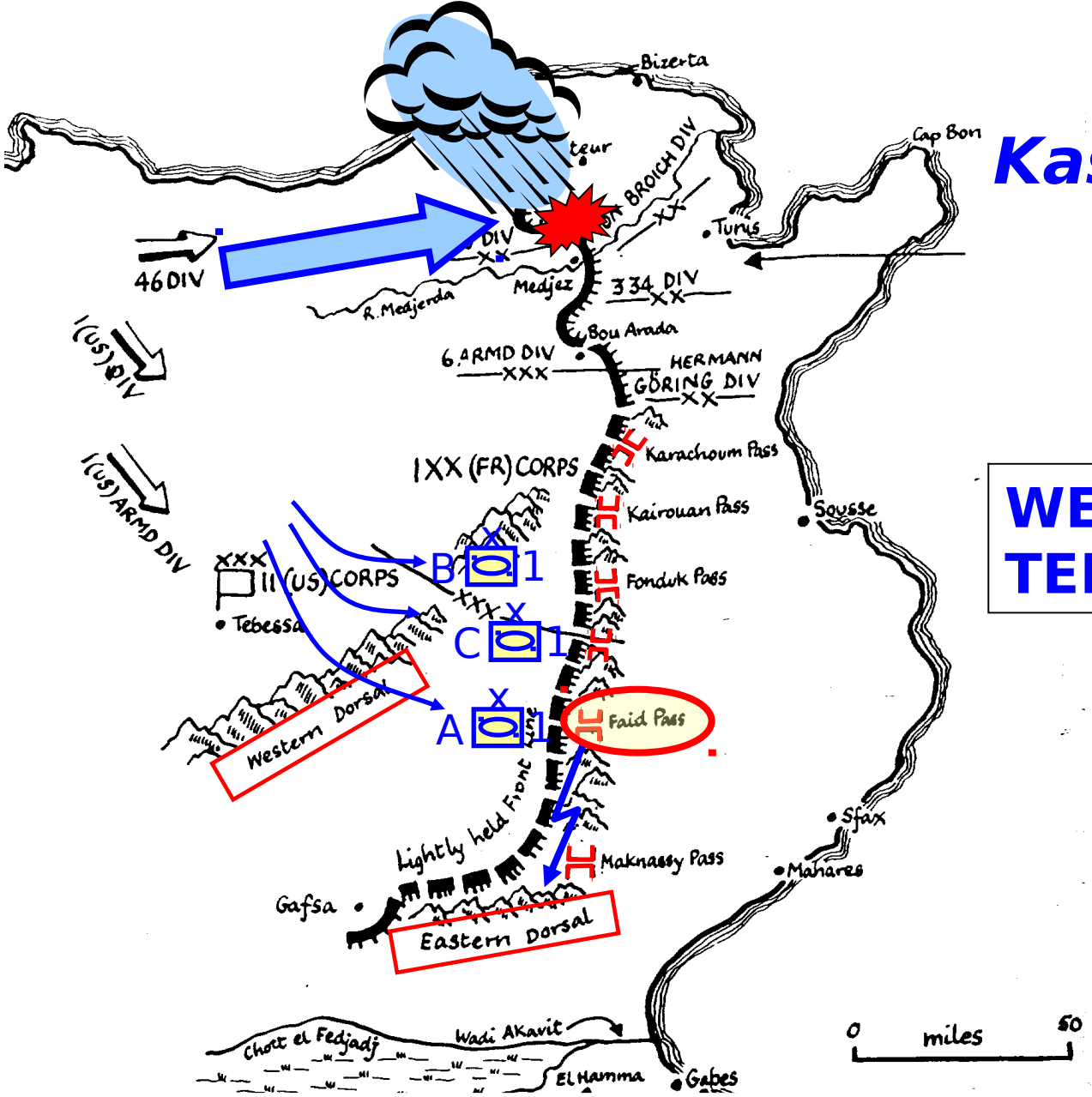

Operational Overview
NORTH AFRICA, 1941
PURSUIT TO TUNISIA,
NOVEMBER 1942-FEBRUARY 1943
38
a
SCALE OF MILES
MALTA
CRETE
Sfax
Mareth
Medenine
4 Feb.
23 Jan.
Tripoli
19 Jan.
Homs
Tarhuna
26 Dec.-16 Jan.
Buerat
25 Dec.
Sirte
15 Jan.
WADI ZEM ZEM
16 Dec.
Merduma
El Agheila
23 Nov.-13 Dec.
Benghazi
20 Nov.
Gedabia
Msus
15 Nov.
Derna
Martuba
Mekili
13 Nov.
Gazala
Tobruk
11 Nov.
Bardia
Salum
9 Nov.
Sidi Barrani
7 Nov.
Charing
Mersa Matruh
Halfaya
Fuka
5 Nov.
El Alemein
CYRENAICA
EGYPT
QUATTARA DEPRESSION
PAA
EIGHTH
Lisbon
SPAIN
MEDITERRANEAN
NORTHWEST AFRICA, 1941
THE ALLIED INVASION,
8 NOVEMBER 1942
b
EASTERN TASK FORCE
CENTER TASK FORCE
WESTERN TASK FORCE
Algiers
Bougie
Djidjelli
Philippeville
Bone
Bizerte
Beja
Souk El Arba
Souk Ahras
Gibraltar
Tangier
Oran
Tafaraoui
SPANISH MOROCCO
Port Lyautey
Sale
Rabat
Casablanca
Mazagan
Fedala
Fez
Meknes
Oujda
Sousse
Kairouan
Youks Les Bains
Tebessa
Kasserine
Thelepte
Sfax
Biskra
Gafsa
Gabes
Mareth
ALGERIA
MOROCCO
TUNISIA
LIBYA
Safi
Mogador
Marrakech

Operational Overview



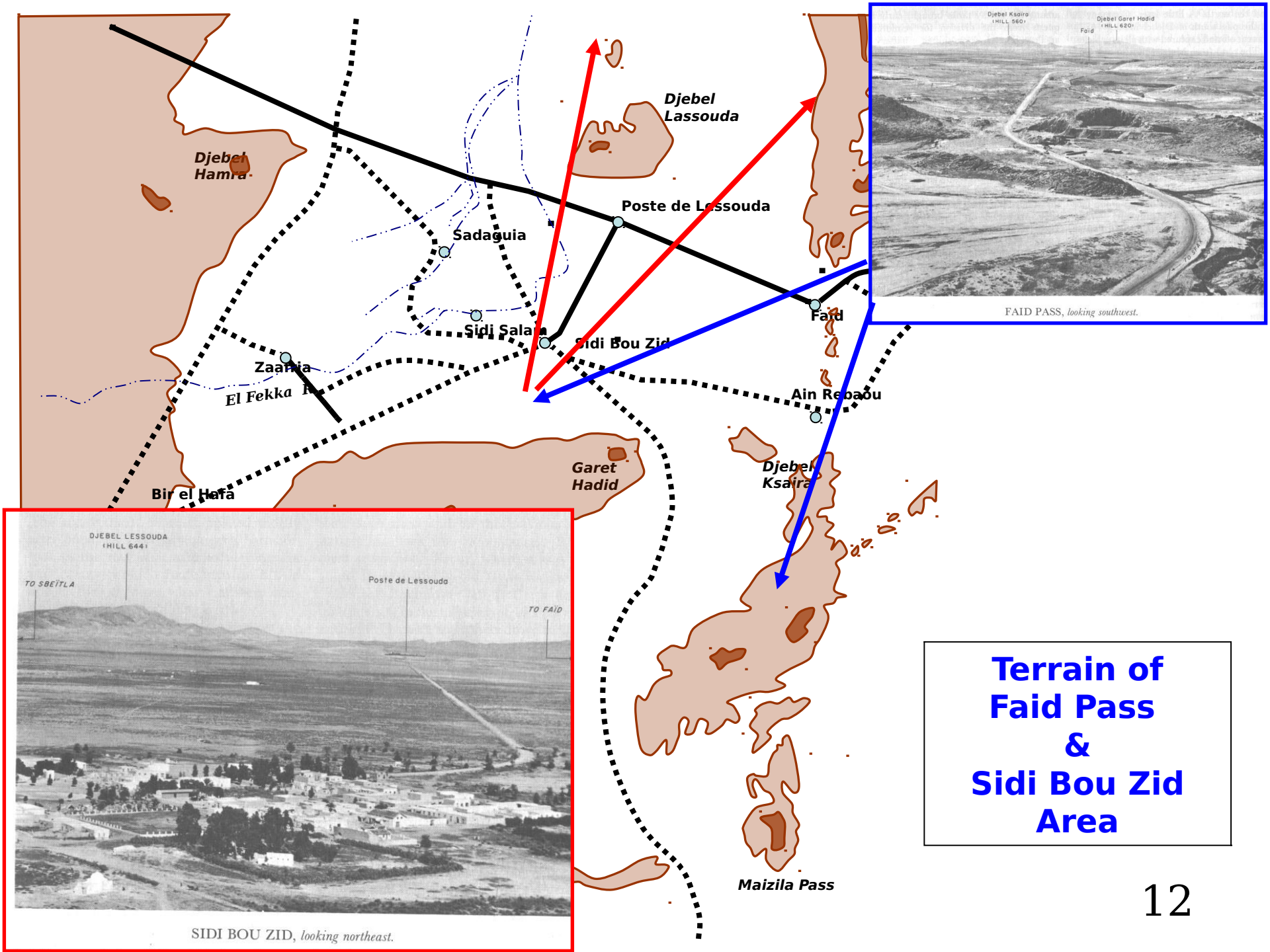


Kasserine Pass



WEATHER & TERRAIN

***1st AD Disposition prior to German Offensive



Terrain of Faid Pass & Sidi Bou Zid Area

Step 2--Set the Stage
Part C: Compare Forces

- Size & composition
- Technology
- Doctrine & Training
- Logistics
- Intelligence
- C3
- Condition & Morale
- Leadership

Doctrine and Training

Kasserine Pass

- Germans
  - Doctrine well defined and soldiers battle hardened after several years of war experience.

- US
  - Majority of troops still relatively “green”.
  - Tank Doctrine flawed:
    - Tanks not intended to fight other tanks
    - Cheaper Tank Destroyers were intended to defeat Armor Penetrations.

General McNair (Commander-Army Ground Forces) Summer 1941:

“ Certainly it is poor economy to use a $35,000 medium tank to destroy another tank when the job can be done by a gun costing a fraction as much.”

Technology

Kasserine Pass

M4 Sherman

Weight: 30 Tons
Gun: 75 mm
Front Armor: 51-76 mm
Speed: 39 kph

M3

Weight: 9 Tons
Gun: 75 mm
Front Armor: 6-12 mm
Speed: 64 kph

PzKpfw III J

Weight: 22 Tons
Gun: 50 mm
Front Armor: 50 mm
Speed: 38 kph

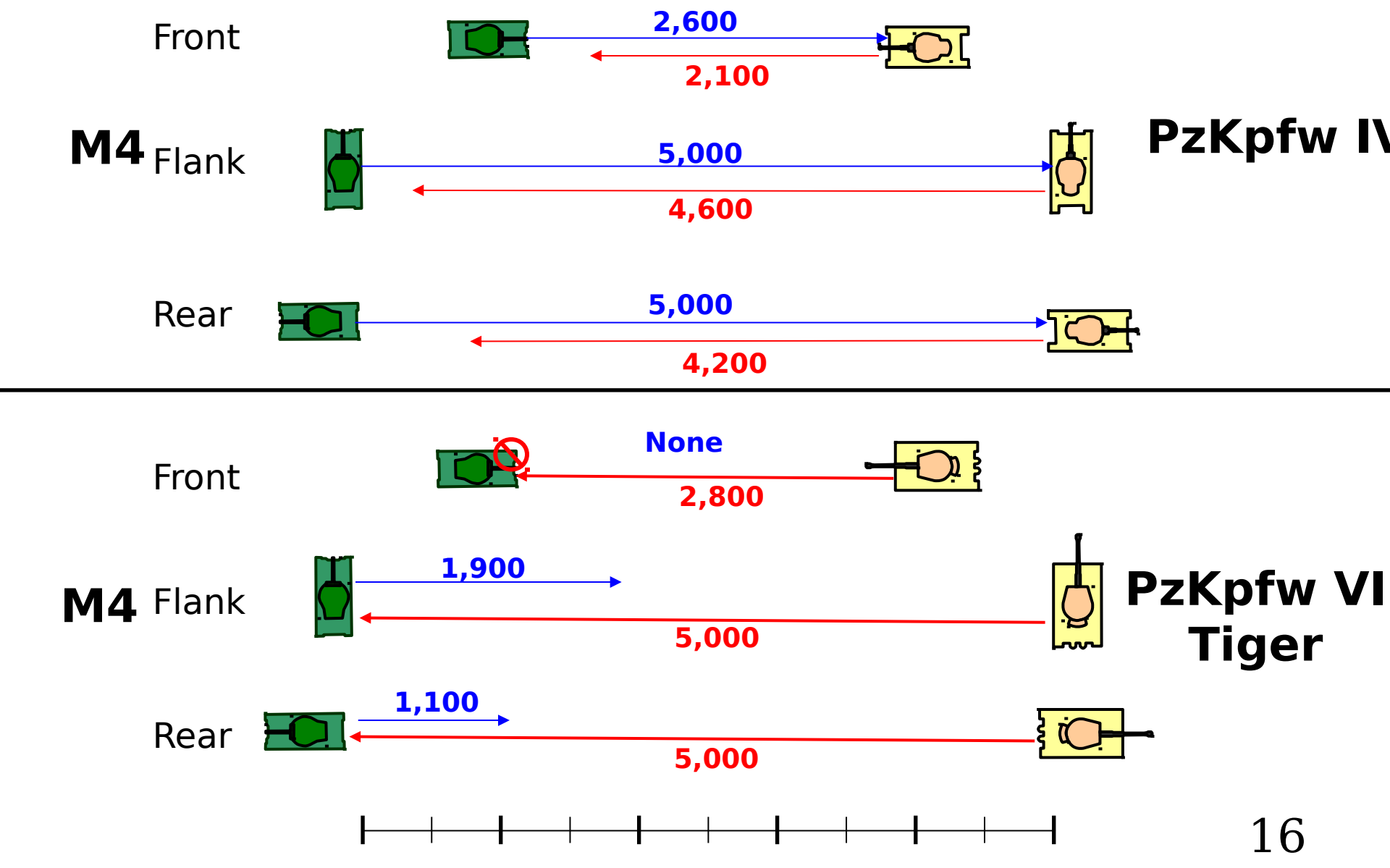
PzKpfw IV F2

Weight: 25 Tons
Gun: 75 mm
Front Armor: 50 mm
Speed: 38 kph

PzKpfw VI Tiger

Weight: 57 Tons
Gun: 88 mm
Front Armor: 100 mm
Speed: 38 kph

Maximum Penetration Comparison (In Yr



Size & Composition

15 Feb 1943

CC C

2 1
≈50 M4s
3 6
G 13
≈17 M4s
B/701
≈12 M3s

Div Reserve

1 6
1 13
C/701

DJ Lassouda

2 168
≈10 M4s ≈4 M3s

CC A Reserve
LTC Hightower

3 (-) 1
≈40 M4s
A/701 (-)
≈8 M3s

CC A

91(-)
2 17

Garet Hadid

168

DJ Ksaira

3 168

PANZER DIVISION

KG Gerhardt

1 7 2 69
≈22 Pz IV
≈66 Pz III

KG Reimann

2 86
≈10 Tigers/10 Pzr IIIs

21st PANZER DIVISION

KG Schuette

104
≈10 Pz IV
≈20 Pz III

KG Stenkhoff

1 5 2 5 104
≈20 Pz IV
0 Pz III

** Not Complete Task Organizations

Intelligence

Kasserine Pass

- Germans had correctly identified Allies were thinly deployed and struggling with logistics

- Allied Intelligence failed
  - 1st Army incorrectly identified Germans would attack in the North.
  - General Anderson diverted strong Combat Command from 1st AD to back-up weak French XIX Corps. This resulted in weakness in south.

C3

Kasserine Pass

- Axis Strained
  - Commando Supremo in control of German troops.
  - FM Kesselring considered only an Advisor to Commando Supremo, not in direct control of Panzer Army Afrika or 5th Panzer Army
  - Rommel and Von Arnim considered equals: Therefore, no supreme commander on ground during campaign.
  - Violation of Unity of Command
- II Corps Dysfunctional
  - Corp Commander Bypasses COC
  - Extremely Directive Orders

C3

Kasserine Pass

– Corps Order:

- "**DJ Ksaira on the South and DJ Lessouda on the North are the key terrain features** in the defense of Faid. These two features must be strongly held, with a **mobile reserve in the vicinity of Sidi Bou Zid** which can rapidly launch a counter attack"
- "A **Battalion of infantry** should be employed for the defense of DJ Ksaira, and the bulk of a **battalion of infantry** together with a **battery of artillery** and a **company of tanks** for the defense of DJ Lessouda"

Leadership

Kasserine Pass

- MG Fredendall (II Corps Commander)
  - Hands-off commander. Rarely left Command Post:
    - 60-70 miles from front
    - Underground Bunkers
    - Guarded by Ranger Company.
  - Verbal orders were vague
  - Often Bypassed MG Ward (1 AD Commander) and coordinated directly with combat commanders.
  - Operation Order extremely directive. Not based on personal recon.

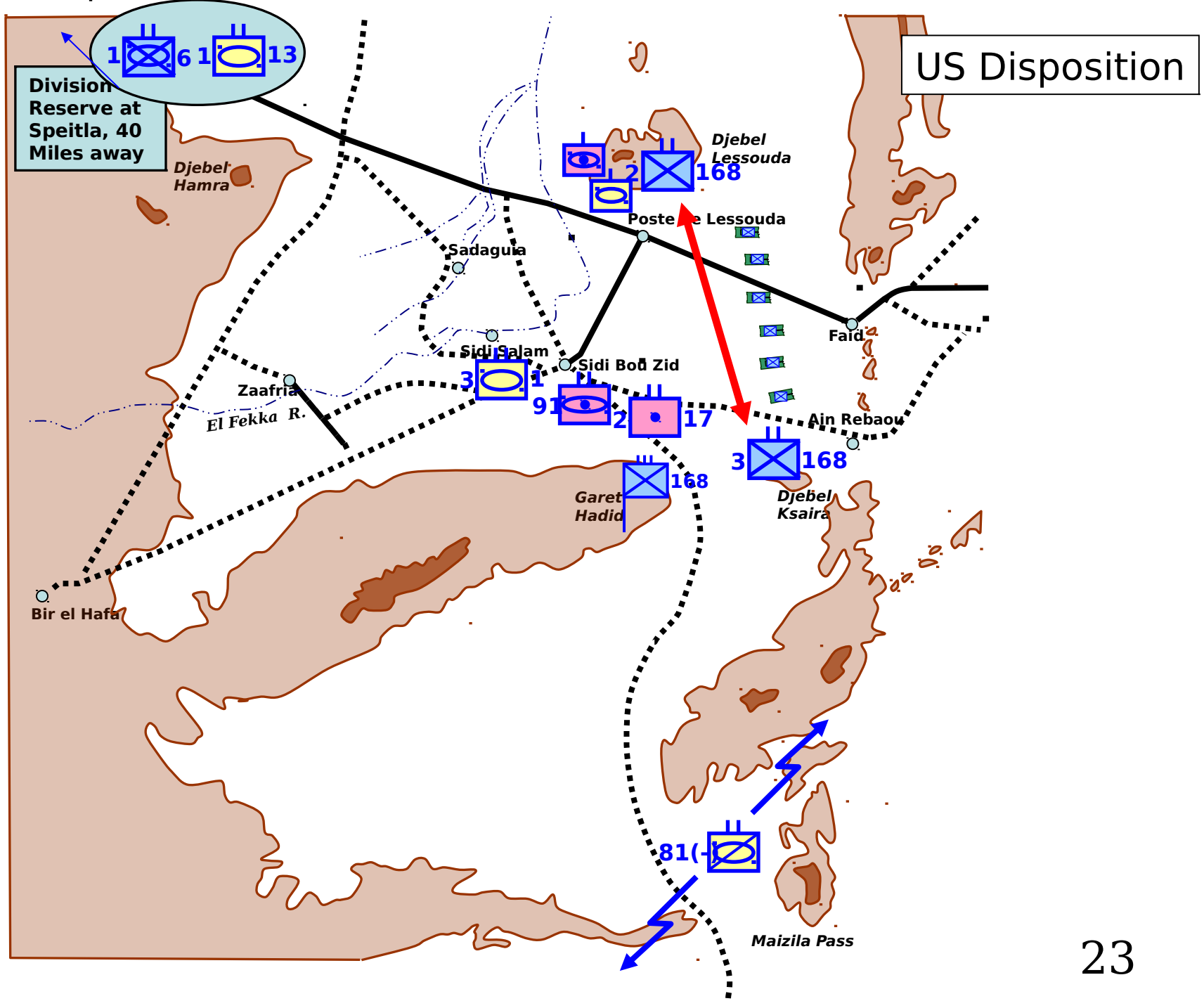
Step 2--Set the Stage
Part D: State the Mission

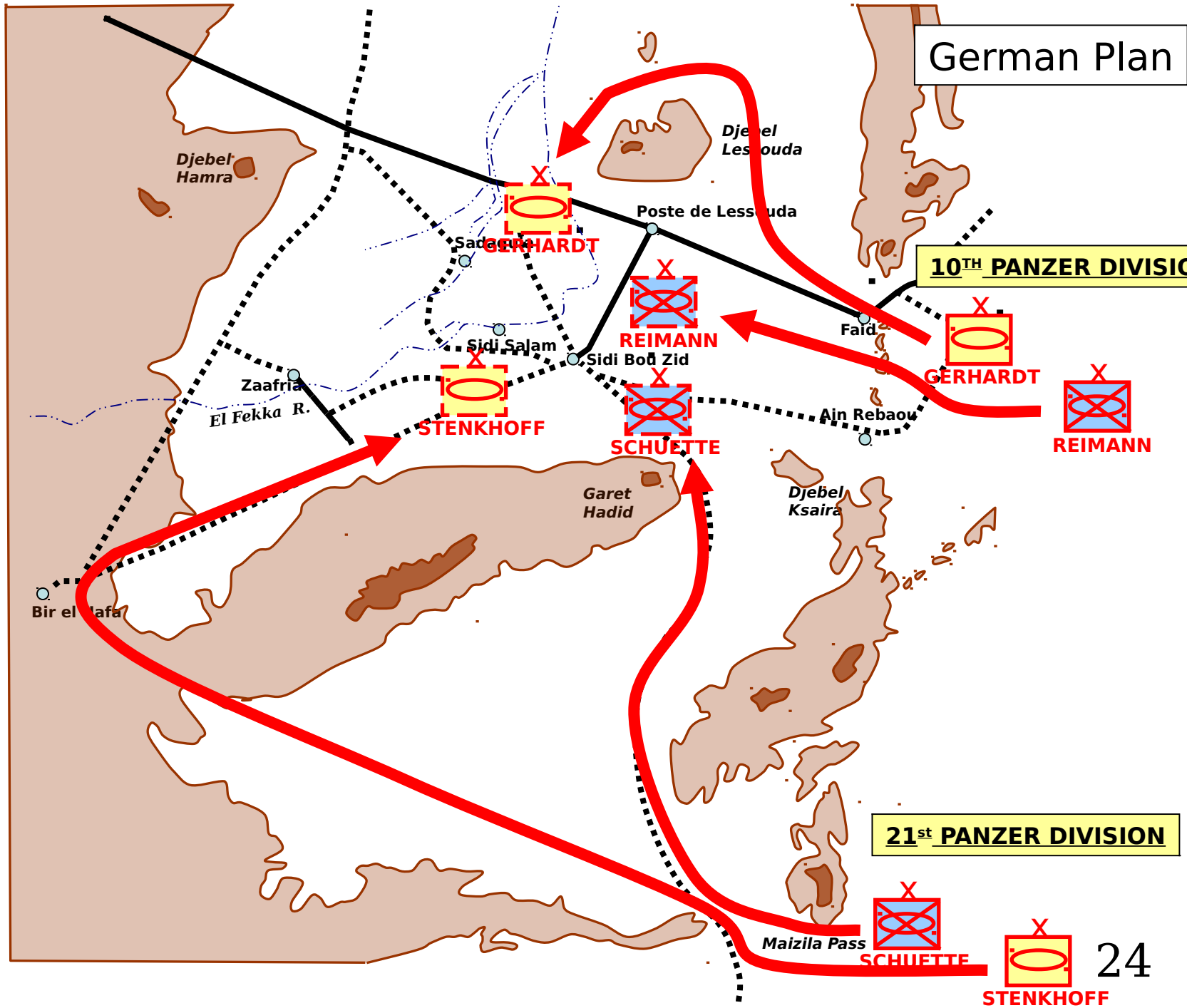
U.S.

- Mission: CCA Defends Faid and Maizila Passes
- Division Objective: Protect French XIX Corps Southern Flank until 1st Army can resume offensive operations.

German

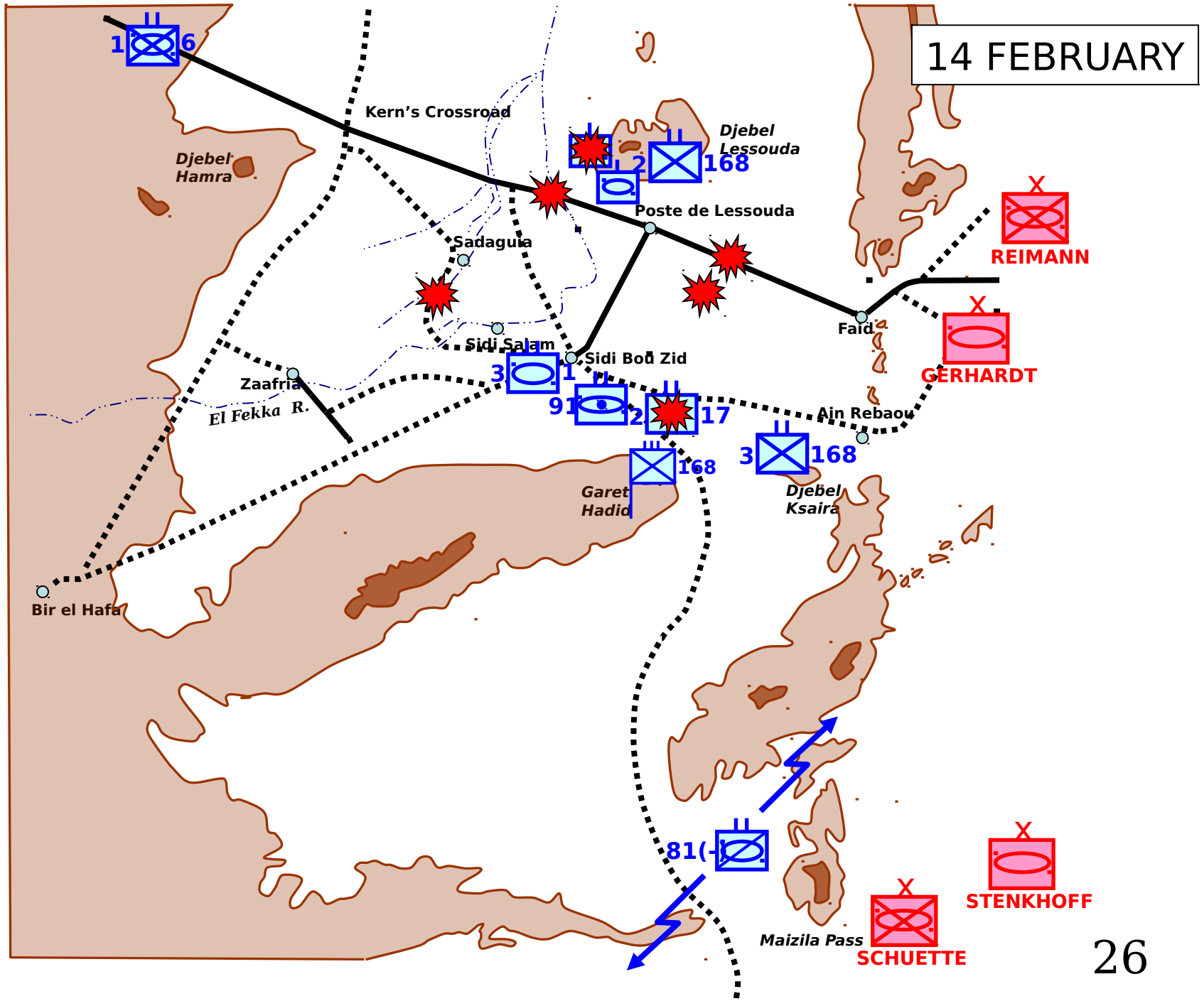
- Mission: Elements of 5th Panzer Army Attacks Sidi Bou Zid to Destroy enemy forces and prepare for follow-on missions.
- Army Group Objective: Create a buffer for Rommel's western flank. Beyond that, Objective is never fully resolved between the two Army Commanders involved in Kasserine Pass

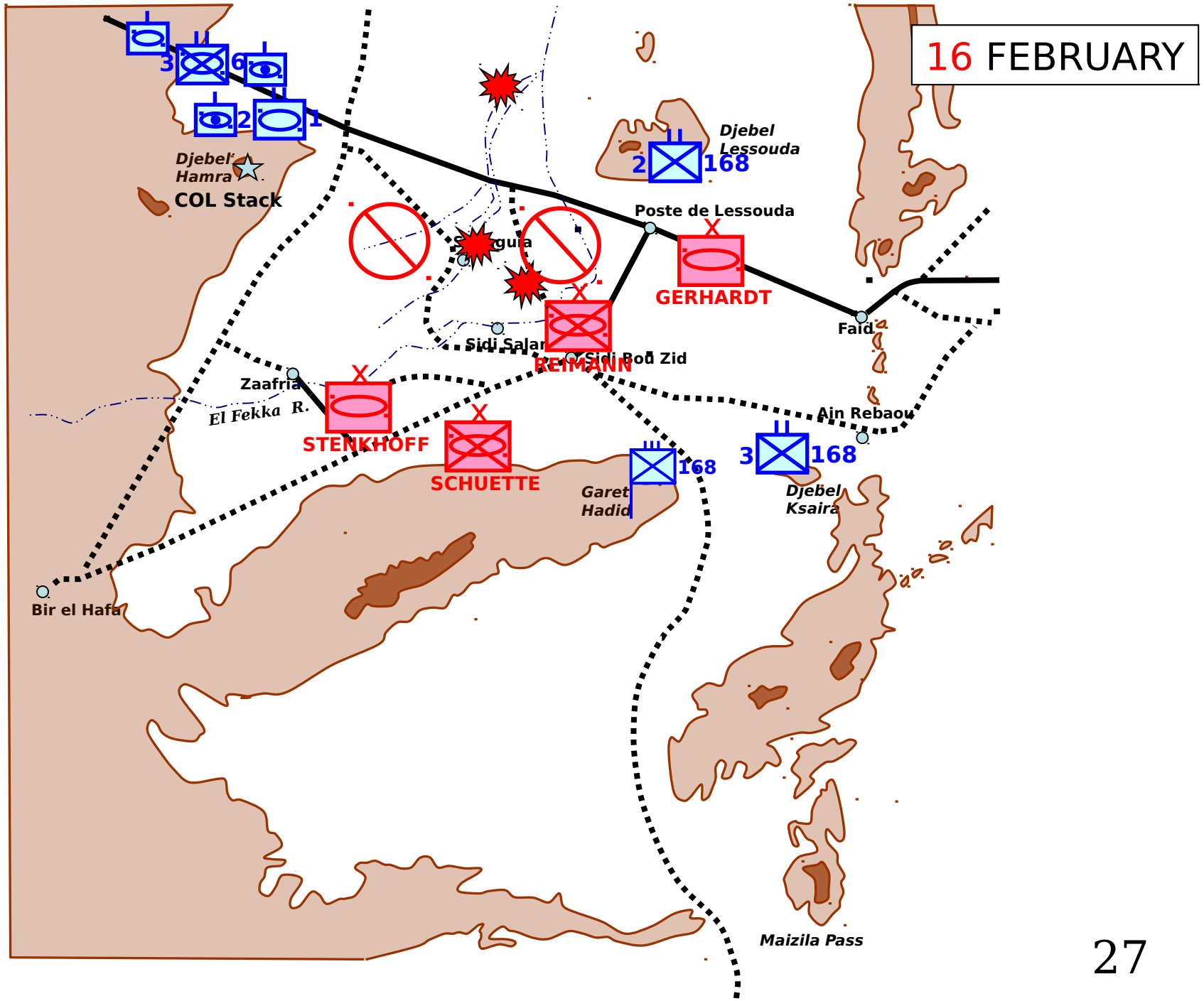

US Disposition
Division Reserve at Speitla, 40 Miles away
Djebel Hamra
Djebel Lessouda
168
Poste de Lessouda
Sadaguia
Faid
Sidi Salam
Sidi Bou Zid
Zaafrane
El Fekka R.
Ain Rebaou
168
Djebel Ksaira
Garet Hadid
168
Bir el Hafa
81(
Maizila Pass


German Plan
Djebel Hamra
Djebel Lessouda
Poste de Lessouda
Sadagura
GERHARDT
10TH PANZER DIVISION
REIMANN
Faid
Sidi Salam
Sidi Bou Zid
GERHARDT
Zaafria
El Fekka R.
STENKHOFF
SCHUETTE
Ain Rebaou
REIMANN
Garet Hadid
Djebel Ksaira
Bir el Hafa
21st PANZER DIVISION
Maizila Pass
SCHUETTE
STENKHOFF

Step 3--Describe the Action

- Describe opening moves
- Detail major phases
- State outcome


14 FEBRUARY
Kern's Crossroad
Djebel Hamra
Djebel Lessouda
Poste de Lessouda
Sadaguia
Sidi Salam
Sidi Bou Zid
Faid
Zaafria
El Fekka R.
Ain Rebaou
Garet Hadid
Djebel Ksaira
Bir el Hafa
Maizila Pass
REIMANN
GERHARDT
STENKHOFF
SCHUETTE
168
168
168
17
81(


16 FEBRUARY
Djebel Hamra
COL Stack
Djebel Lessouda
2
168
Poste de Lessouda
GERHARDT
Faid
Sidi Salah
Sidi Bou Zid
REHMANN
Zaafria
El Fekka R.
STENKHOFF
SCHUETTE
168
Garet Hadid
3
168
Djebel Ksaira
Ain Rebaou
Bir el Hafa
Maizila Pass

OUTCOME

15 Feb 1943

14 Feb 1943

Div Reserve

1 6

1 13

C/701

CC C

≈30 M4s

3 6

C 13

≈17 M4s

B/70

≈12 M3s

DJ Lassouda

2 168

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CC A Reserve

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CC A

91(-)

2 17

Garet Hadid

168

DJ Ksaira

3 168

10TH PANZER DIVISION

KG Gerhardt

1 7 2 69

≈22 Pz IV
≈66 Pz III

KG Reimann

2 86

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≈10 Pz IV
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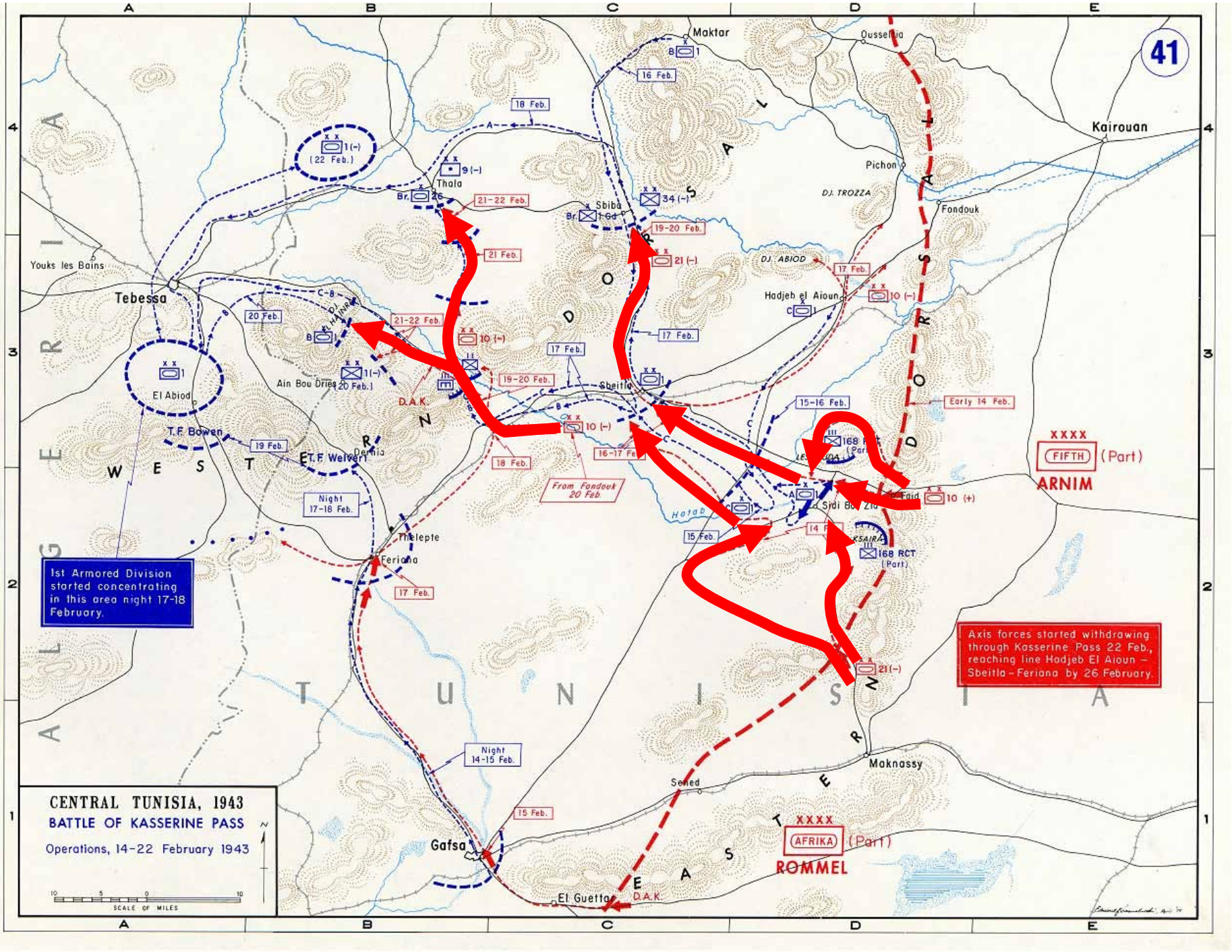
KG Stenkhoff

1 5 2 5 104

≈20 Pz IV
0 Pz III

** Not Complete Task Organizations

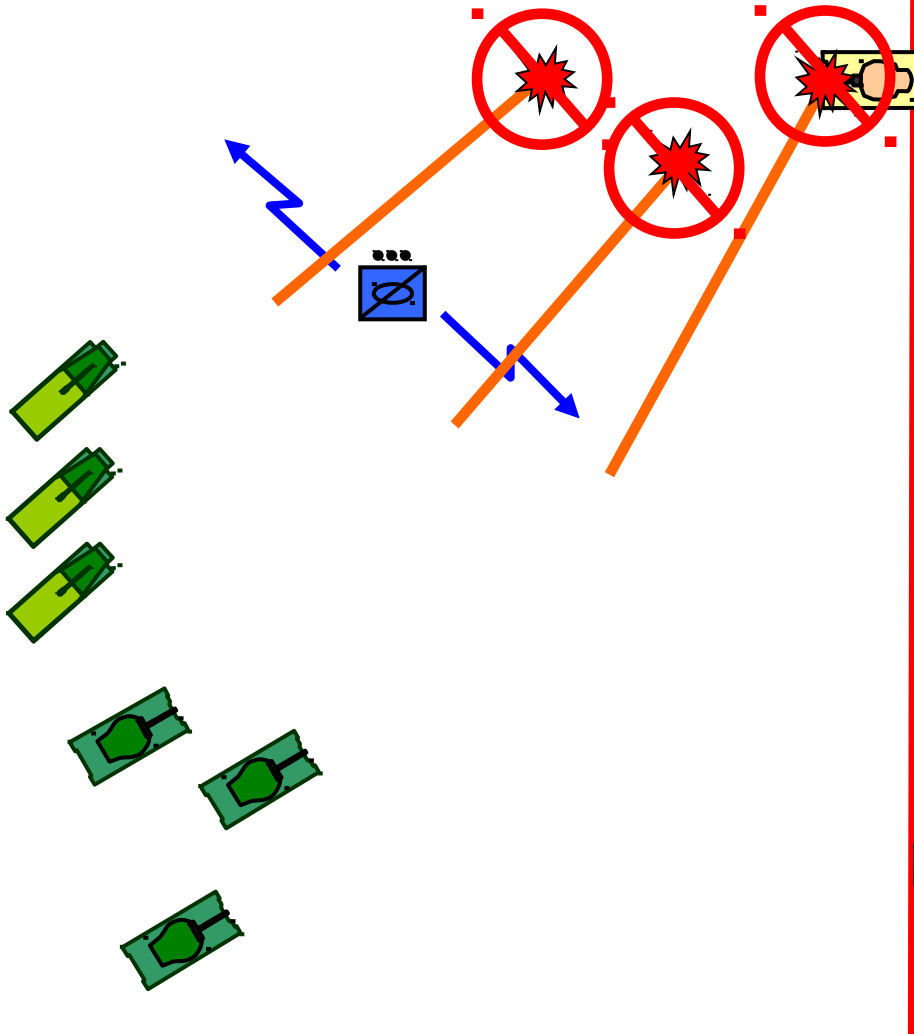

41
CENTRAL TUNISIA, 1943
BATTLE OF KASSERINE PASS
Operations, 14-22 February 1943
SCALE OF MILES
1st Armored Division started concentrating in this area night 17-18 February.
Axis forces started withdrawing through Kasserine Pass 22 Feb., reaching line Hadjeb El Aioun – Sbeitla – Feriana by 26 February.
XXXX FIFTH (Part) ARNIM
XXXX AFRIKA (Part) ROMMEL
ALGERIA
TUNISIA
WESTERN DORSALE
EASTERN DORSALE
Maktar
Ousseltia
Kairouan
Pichon
Fondouk
Djebel Trozza
Djebel Abiod
Youks les Bains
Tebessa
El Abiod
Thala
Sbiba
Hadjeb el Aioun
Ain Bou Dries
Sbeitla
Feriana
Thelepte
Gafsa
El Guettar
Maknassy
Sened
Hatab
Oued Sidi Bou Zid
Djebel Lessouda
Djebel Ksaira
T.F. Bowen
T.F. Welvert
D.A.K.
168 RCT (Part)
16 Feb.
18 Feb.
21-22 Feb.
21 Feb.
19-20 Feb.
17 Feb.
20 Feb.
19 Feb.
Night 17-18 Feb.
16-17 Feb.
From Fondouk 20 Feb.
15-16 Feb.
Early 14 Feb.
15 Feb.
Night 14-15 Feb.

Step 4—Assess the Significance

- Cause and Effect
  - Why did events turn out the way they did?
- Relevance
  - What is relevant about this study to current operations?
    - Principles of War
    - Threads Of Continuity
    - Warfighting Functions

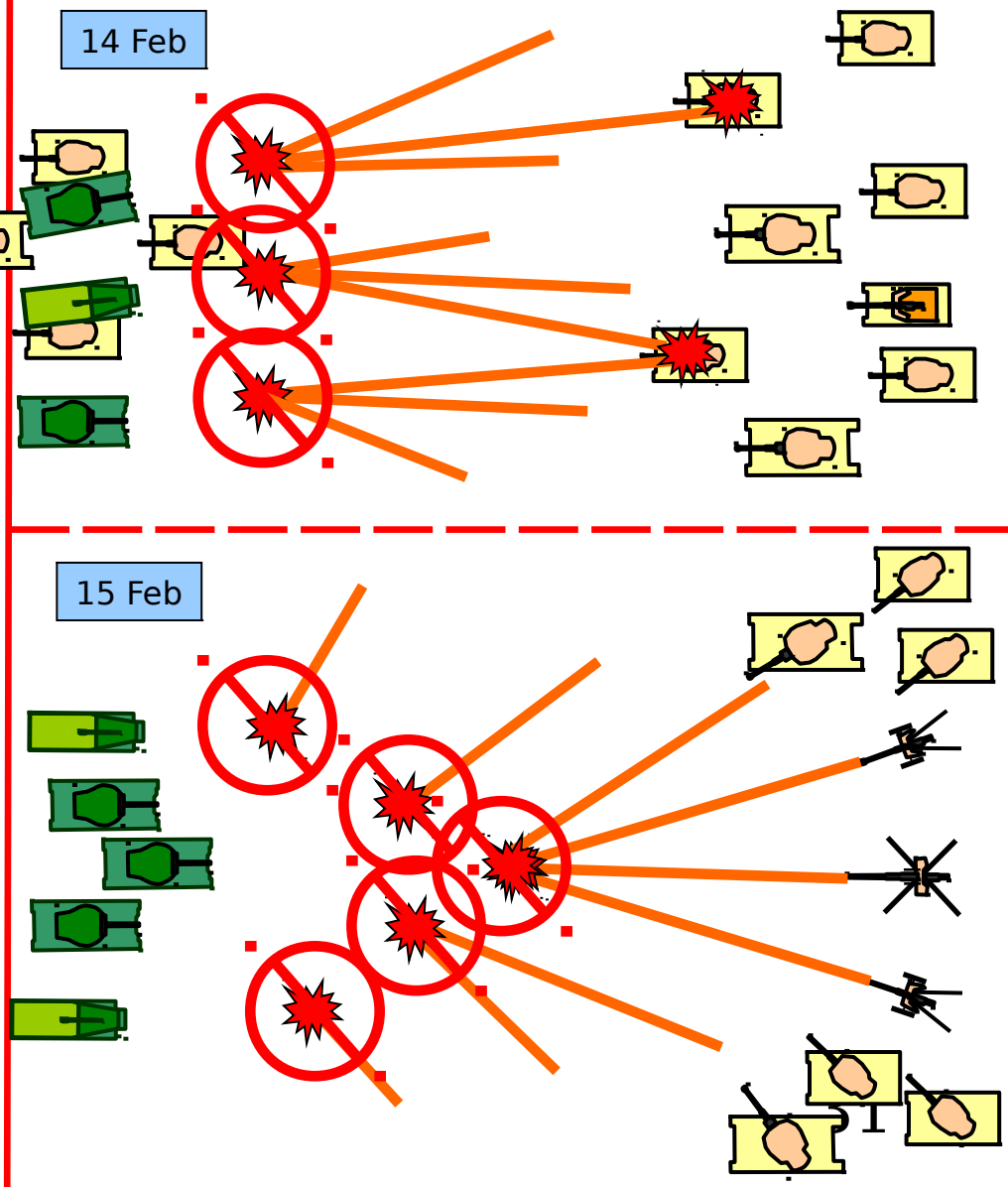
Doctrine

US Tank/Tank Destroyer Doctrine



Kasserine Pass

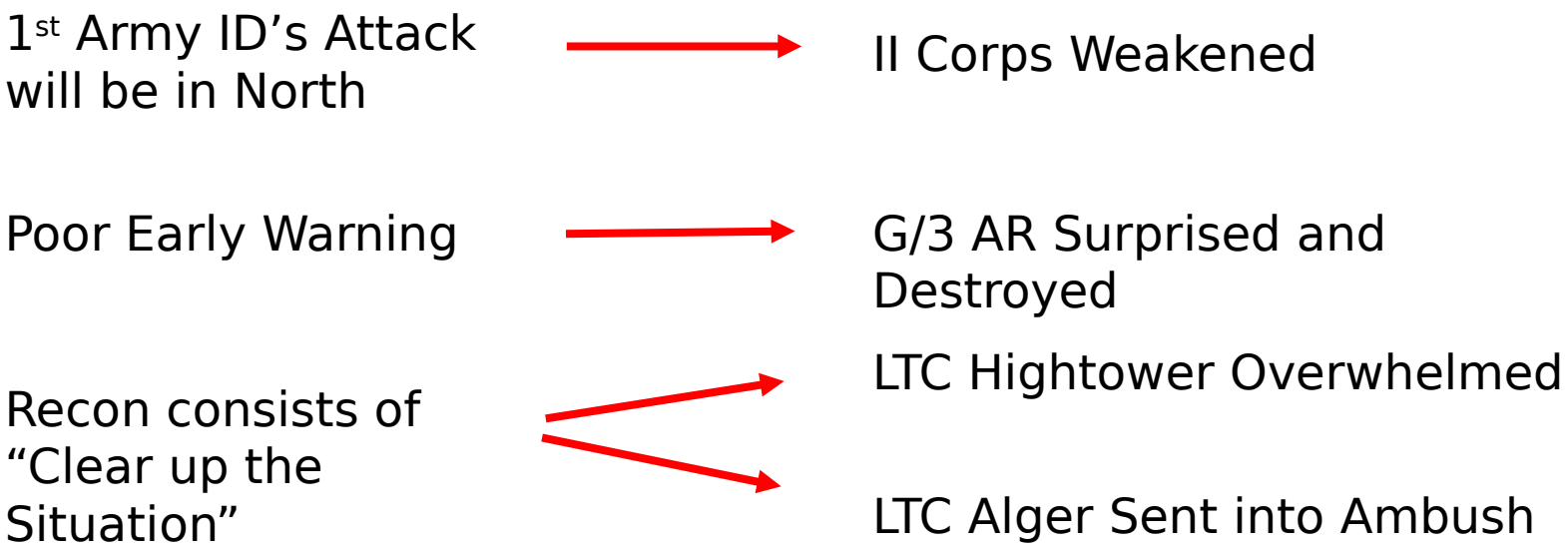
US Tank/TD Reality in 1943



Intelligence

Kasserine Pass

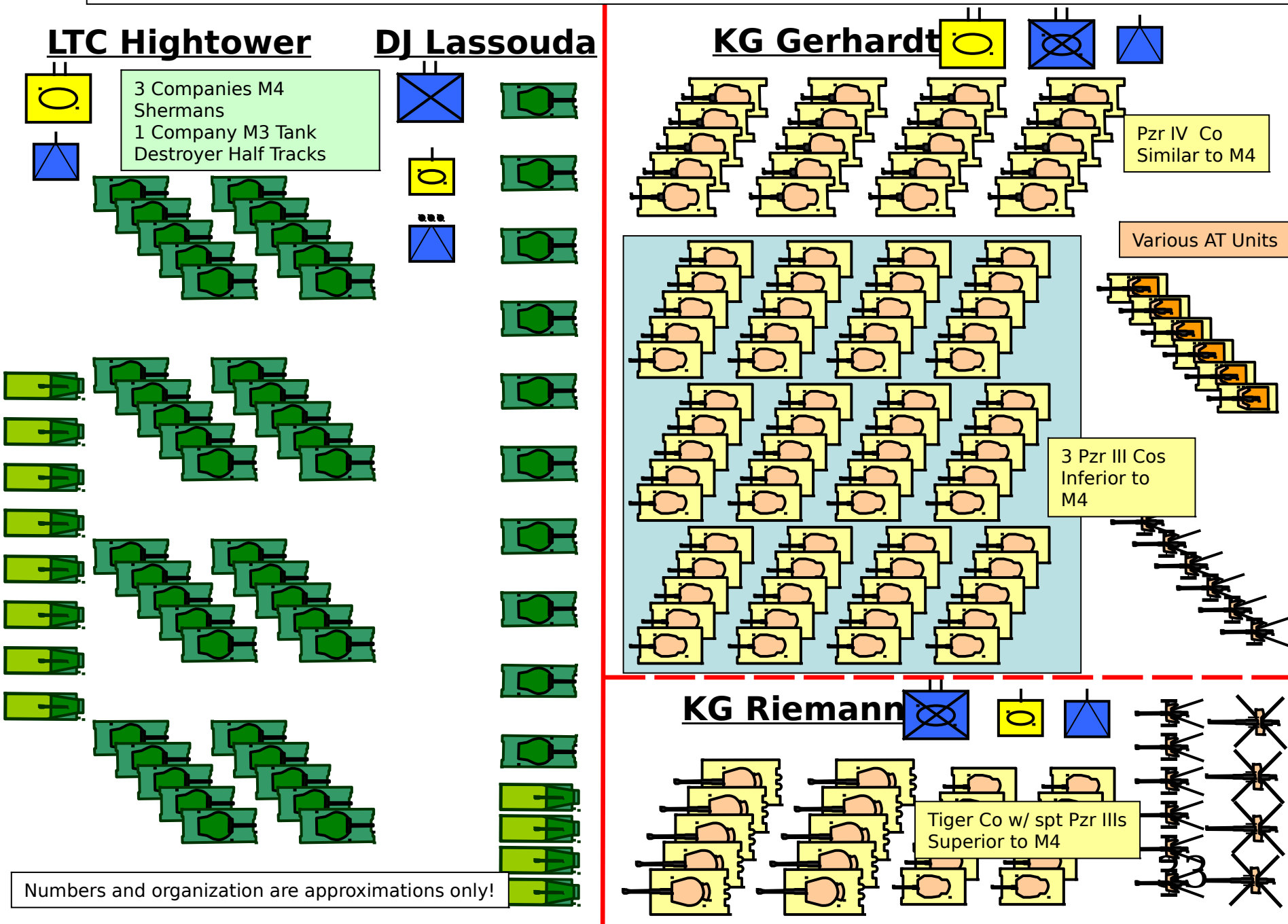
Cause/Effect


1st Army ID's Attack will be in North
II Corps Weakened
Poor Early Warning
G/3 AR Surprised and Destroyed
Recon consists of "Clear up the Situation"
LTC Hightower Overwhelmed
LTC Alger Sent into Ambush

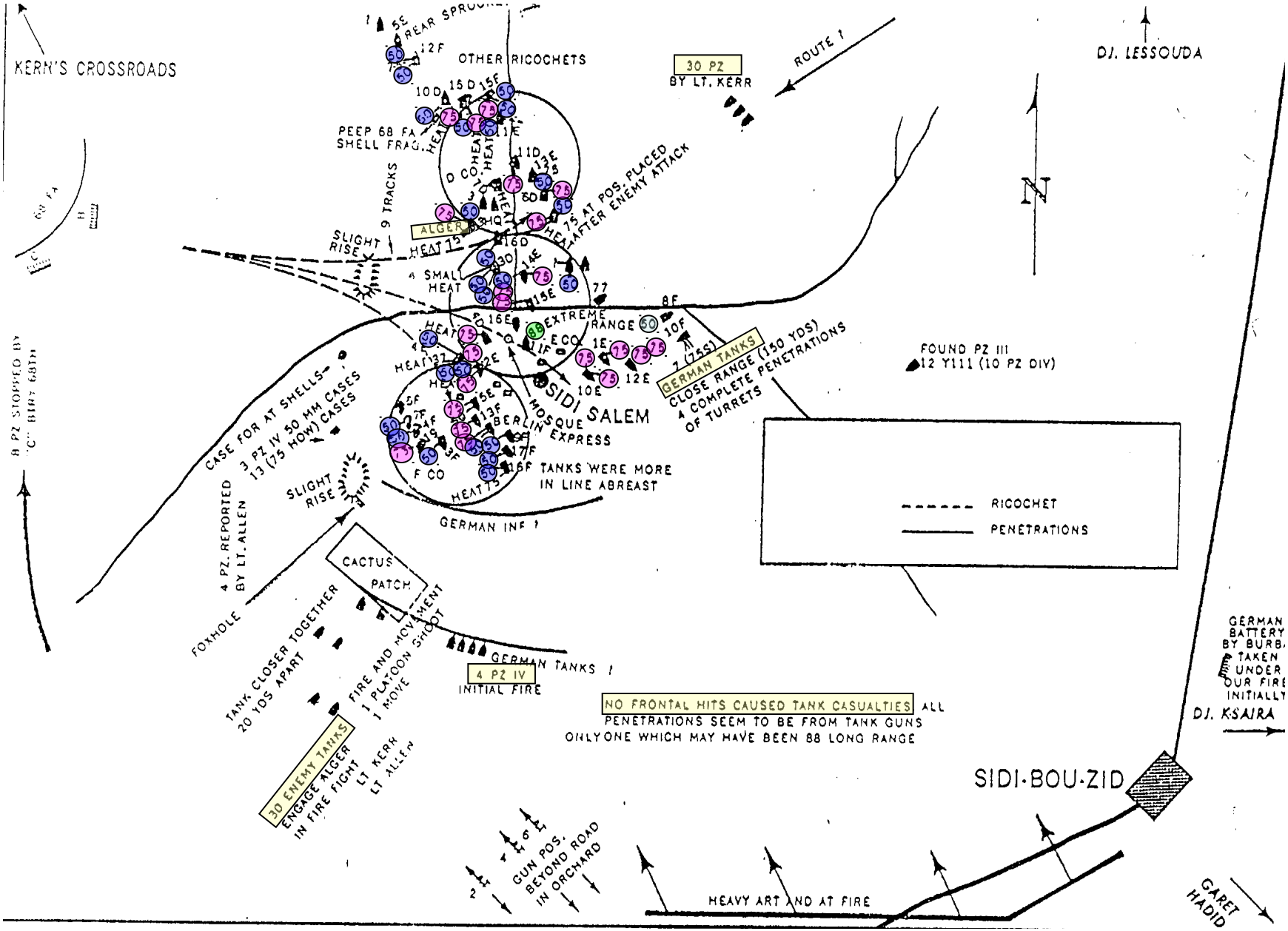
Insight

- Violation of Principle of War: Security

COMPARISON OF MAIN DIRECT FIRE WEAPONS SYSTEMS 14 Feb '


LTC Hightower
DJ Lassouda
3 Companies M4 Shermans
1 Company M3 Tank Destroyer Half Tracks
KG Gerhardt
Pzr IV Co Similar to M4
Various AT Units
3 Pzr III Cos Inferior to M4
KG Riemann
Tiger Co w/ spt Pzr IIIs Superior to M4
Numbers and organization are approximations only!

The Destruction of LTC Alger's 2nd Battalion, 1st Armored Regime



Leadership

Kasserine Pass

Cause/Effect

Battlefield Math

Directive Orders

+ No Leader Recon

- Subordinate Counsel

= Conditions for Failure

Insight

- Flexibility in the Plan
- Faith in Subordinates

Check on Learning:

Battle Analysis Methodology